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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/985,736	11/06/2001	Toshiki Kindo	P21671	4235

7055 7590 03/18/2005

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RESTON, VA 20191

EXAMINER

GARG, YOGESH C

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3625

DATE MAILED: 03/18/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/985,736

Applicant(s)

KINDO ET AL.

Examiner

Yogesh C Garg

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 November 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-14, drawn to an e-commerce system comprising a merchandise distribution unit, plurality of consumer terminals, and a clearing unit , classified in class 705, subclass 26.
 - II. Claim 15 , drawn to a consumer terminal, classified in class 705, subclass 26.
 - III. Claim 16 drawn to a consumer terminal, classified in class 705, subclass 26.
 - IV. Claims 17-22 drawn to e-commerce system distributing merchandise information from a seller to a plurality of consumers, classified in class 705, subclass 26.
 - V. Claims 23-25, drawn to an e-commerce system, classified in class 705, subclass 26.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

2. Inventions I and III are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed in Group I does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the merchandise information pieces distributed to the said consumer terminal are transferred to the information filtering section of the another one of said consumer terminals and information filtering section of the another one of said consumer terminals ranks the merchandise information pieces based on the personal profile stored in the storage section of the another one of said consumer terminals to return to the one of said

consumer terminals, see claim 3. The subcombination in Group III has separate utility such as "merchandise information pieces are transferred from another consumer terminal with permission of the personal profile of stored in said storage section, said information filtering section ranks the merchandise information pieces based on the personal profile stored in said storage section to return to said another consumer terminal". The utility of subcombination is just the opposite of what is required in combination group I.

3. Inventions II and III are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct from each other if they are shown to be separately usable. In the instant case, invention II has separate utility such as comprising "a utilization querying section.....information pieces.", see claim 15. See MPEP § 806.05(d).

4. Inventions I and IV are distinct inventions. The invention as recited in Group IV does not require "a plurality of consumer terminals each having a storage section that stores a personal profile with which various keywords contained in the merchandise information pieces and evaluation values corresponding to the keywords are registered, the evaluation values learned in advance based on a preference of a consumer, and an information filtering section that ranks the merchandise information pieces distributed from said merchandise information server to match the preference of the consumer, based on the personal profile ", which is required in Group I.

5. Inventions IV and V are distinct inventions. The invention as recited in Group IV does not require "a plurality of consumer terminals each having a storage section that stores a personal profile with which various keywords contained in the merchandise information pieces and

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evaluation values corresponding to the keywords are registered, the evaluation values learned in advance based on a preference of a consumer, and an information filtering section that ranks the merchandise information pieces distributed from said merchandise information server to match the preference of the consumer, based on the personal profile ", which is required in Group I.

6. All groups are distinct from each other for similar reasons as given above. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and the search required for one Group is different than required for another Group, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

7. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

8. This application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species of the claimed invention in Group I:

claims 6-7;

claim 8;

claim 9;

claim 10;

claims 11 and 12;

claim 13; and

claim 14.

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, claims 1-5 are generic.

9. This application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species of the claimed invention in Group IV:

claim 19;

claim 20;

claim 21;

claim 22;

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, claims 17-18 are generic.

9. Applicant is advised that a reply to this requirement must include an identification of the species that is elected consonant with this requirement, and a listing of all claims readable thereon, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

10. Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a).

11. Should applicant traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

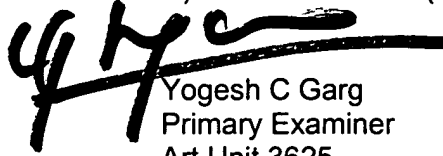
10. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Yogesh C Garg whose telephone number is 703-306-0252. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F(8:30-4:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wynn Coggins can be reached on 703-308-1344. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Yogesh C Garg
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3625

YCG
March 9, 2005